

PLANNING POLICY

TO:	Council	
DATE:	February 16, 2021	DIVISION: All
TIME:	Morning Appointment	
FILE:	1013-136	APPLICATION: N/A
SUBJECT:	Adoption of proposed Bylaw C-8090-2020 (New Municipal Development Plan)	

POLICY DIRECTION:

Direction for the preparation of this Plan came from the Terms of Reference (TOR) adopted by Council on January 22, 2019.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Administration is presenting for Council's consideration the new Municipal Development Plan (the Plan), which will outline the vision for Rocky View County from a planning and development perspective and provide direction for how and where the County will grow over the next 20 years. This Plan is the result of a review of the existing Municipal Development Plan, being the County Plan, which was adopted in October 2013.

The approved TOR, the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) and the Interim Growth Plan (adopted October 4, 2018) provide a framework for development of the Plan. The goal of the Plan review was to accommodate new growth responsibly, and to provide an important decision making tool for Council, Administration, and stakeholders.

In support of the Plan review, public engagement was accomplished through various methods to ensure comprehensive and meaningful feedback was collected and utilized throughout the development of the Plan. In accordance with the Interim Growth Plan, a structured intermunicipal engagement plan was also implemented to obtain input from adjacent municipalities; despite efforts by Administration to collaborate with adjacent municipalities on the draft MDP, The City of Calgary, City of Airdrie, and Town of Cochrane have outstanding concerns that Administration has been unable to address thus far. Administration will present an update on discussions with these municipalities at the public hearing.

The proposed Plan:

- Identifies principles for growth, and proposes a range of policies to guide land use and county-wide matters such as infrastructure, recreation, and policies to implement and monitor the Plan;
- Updates the vision to align with the County's Strategic Plan and provides a framework to manage growth responsibly;
- Provides a framework for the County to operate in accordance with the MGA;
- Is consistent with the goals and policies of the Interim Growth Plan;
- is consistent with the goals and policies of relevant intermunicipal development plans/accords;
- Proposes new employment growth areas, and therefore would contribute to achieving the assessment diversification goals of the County.

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION:

Administration recommends approval in accordance with Option #1.

Administration Resources

Dominic Kazmierczak, Planning Policy



BACKGROUND:

The Plan has been prepared in accordance with Section 632 of the MGA, which outlines the requirements of the content of Municipal Development Plans.

Direction for the preparation of this MDP came from the Terms of Reference adopted by Council on January 22, 2019. It has been over seven (7) years since the County Plan (current MDP) was adopted (October 2013). In that time, the County has continued to grow, and conditions have changed.

Rocky View County has grown by about 15,000 people in the last 20 years, and will continue to grow. The Plan sets the vision for how to accommodate this growth responsibly, serving as an important decision-making tool for Council, County Administration, and stakeholders. Specific goals of the MDP review included:

- Updating the vision, policies, and actions of the 2013 County Plan;
- Describing the County's preferred direction with respect to growth areas, land use, infrastructure investments, business development, and provision of County services;
- Providing policy direction and planning tools regarding land use, transportation, infrastructure, and recreation and community services;
- Informing County bylaws, policies, programs, and investments;
- Establishing a framework for the County to work with regional partners, stakeholders, and communities to find mutually beneficial solutions to planning and development challenges; and
- Helping residents and landowners understand how their land may be used now and in the future.

Content and direction of the Plan was informed by resident and stakeholder feedback, a development suitability analysis, Council workshops, collaboration with neighboring municipalities and regional partners and all relevant provincial legislation, regional and statutory plans, together with non-statutory plans and studies.

PLAN PREPARATION:

The Plan was prepared through a collaborative planning process that began in summer 2019 and resulted in a draft Plan in fall 2020. Landowners, stakeholders, agencies such as Alberta Transportation and regional partners were involved throughout the Plan's development to provide feedback and input into the Plan's vision, principles, and policies.

To accommodate future growth across the County, the new Plan must identify key areas for new residential, commercial, and industrial development, while also protecting natural landscapes, the rural character of the County, and future economic opportunities. This Growth Framework was developed by reviewing current plans and policies, and market patterns, which together informed the Growth Suitability Model.

The Growth Suitability Model, one of the three inputs into the Growth Framework, uses existing spatial data and analysis to identify areas that are suitable to support development and growth. This model was used to inform growth scenarios and the final Plan. The Growth Suitability Model consists of two components: a Preservation Strategy, and a Development Strategy. The Preservation Strategy identifies important landscapes that may not be appropriate for additional development, and the Development Strategy was used to determine suitability of an area for additional new development.

These models were informed by review and knowledge from landowners, residents, and stakeholders as part of the engagement process.



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

The County undertook public engagement over three (3) phases; the focus of each phase is identified below:

- August and September 2019 - Open houses were held around the County, supported by online materials, to gain feedback on creating a vision for the Plan and key principles. The County received 585 survey responses during this engagement phase.
- November 2019 - Further open houses were held, again supported by online materials, to obtain feedback on the draft vision, growth strategies, and development patterns. The County received 294 survey responses in this phase.
- May and June 2020 - The County released the draft MDP for public comments. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, engagement was undertaken online. Engagement specifically focused around land use policies including growth areas, hamlet development, commercial and industrial development, and other natural resource development. The County received 370 survey responses in this phase.

PLAN CONTENT:

The result of the planning process was a vision and set of guiding principles for future decision making. The vision defines the ideal state for the County, while the six guiding principles; relating to responsible growth, economic diversification, community development, agriculture, the environment, and partnerships; add further detail about the elements and actions required to achieve the vision.

Land Use Policies

The Plan's land use policies guide development throughout the County and identify growth areas for residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional development. These growth areas, presented as the Plan's Growth Concept, provide a planning framework that aims to balance sustainable development with providing a high quality of life and diverse range of residential and economic opportunities.

The policies in this section provide a framework to consider and decide on new or amended area structure plans, local plans, land use and subdivision applications.

County-Wide Policies

County-wide policies within the Plan provide high-level direction on County services, operations, and infrastructure. They are intended to improve County services, promote economic diversification, enhance quality of life, and strengthen community identity.

The policies in this section provide a framework for balancing decisions related to: financial sustainability, the transportation network, natural resource development, supporting agriculture, protection of the environment, provision of utility services, solid waste management, creating and maintaining public spaces, promoting services and partnerships, and advancement of recreation, arts, and culture.

Plan Implementation

Implementation of the Plan would occur through several mechanisms and processes, including:

- On-going administration of the development review process, and periodically reviewing and amending area structure plans;
- Carrying out next steps required to implement the vision, guiding principles, and objectives of the MDP; and
- Collaborating with neighbouring municipalities on planning and development related matters.

Table 02: Implementation Actions in the Plan includes a number of short-term actions that should be undertaken to effectively implement the Plan and guarantee its on-going success.



Implementing the Plan would require a commitment to developing plans, strategies, and regulations that are consistently monitored to ensure they are effective as well as fiscally responsible. Section 4.3 in the Plan sets out Performance Measures to ensure development is being effectively guided.

POLICY DIRECTION AND SUPPORT:

Legislative and policy direction for the Plan is provided in the Municipal Government Act, Interim Growth Plan, and within Intermunicipal Development Plans (IDP) adopted in partnership with several municipalities adjoining the County boundary.

Calgary Metropolitan Region Board Interim Growth Plan (IGP)

The proposed Plan was evaluated in accordance with the Calgary Metropolitan Region Board's (CMRB's) Interim Growth Plan (IGP).

The Plan has been drafted to align with the three principles of the IGP, which are to:

1. Promote the integration and efficient use of regional infrastructure;
2. Protect water quality and promote water conservation; and
3. Encourage Efficient Growth and strong and sustainable communities.

A key focus of the MDP is to ensure the sustainable use of land, and the policies contained within the draft aim at preserving agricultural lands while promoting more efficient development patterns within the identified growth areas. Concurrently, the Plan includes flexibility for new growth opportunities to meet the diverse residential and business needs within the County.

The Plan's policies in relation to residential and employment areas ensure that important regional matters such as transit, source water protection, and flood risk management are adequately addressed both within the IGP criteria for relevant development types (intensification and infill, country residential, expansion of settlement areas and employment areas), and in the IGP's region-wide policies. The growth strategy also seeks to promote appropriate land uses around the identified regional corridors to maximize benefits, while also protecting the integrity of these corridors.

With respect to Policy 3.2.2 of the IGP relating to collaboration, the County undertook a thorough and structured engagement process with adjacent municipalities and relevant agencies. Specific details on intermunicipal discussions and outcomes are detailed in the sections below.

Overall, Administration considers that the draft Plan is in full accordance with the policies of the IGP.

Intermunicipal Development Plans

In preparing the draft Plan, the County was guided by all Intermunicipal Development Plans and Accords previously adopted by Council. Policies relating to growth corridors, collaboration and referral, and a range of other land use matters contained within those documents were considered, and the Plan has ensured compatibility with each of these statutory and non-statutory documents. Each adjacent municipality was circulated on the draft Plan in accordance with requirements of the MGA, and where appropriate, in accordance with the relevant statutory plan. A summary of the intermunicipal engagement undertaken by the County is set out below, together with the outcomes of that collaboration.

INTERMUNICIPAL COLLABORATION:

Intermunicipal collaboration commenced in early 2020; initial workshop meetings were held with several adjacent municipalities in February and March 2020 to introduce the project timeline and approach, and to gain initial input on any items to be addressed through collaboration. Once a draft document had been developed and further public engagement undertaken, the County circulated the draft to all adjacent municipalities and First Nations for input and comment, alongside circulation to provincial agencies and other statutory bodies; this occurred in November 2020.



Following feedback from a number of municipalities and agencies, the County revised the Plan appropriately and sent the revised draft out to municipalities and stakeholders in December 2020, together with responses to those parties where suggested amendments had not been incorporated into the Plan.

Of the adjacent municipalities that responded, the City of Chestermere, Town of Crossfield, Mountain View County, and Wheatland County raised no concerns. However, the municipalities of the City of Airdrie, The City of Calgary, and the Town of Cochrane all retain outstanding concerns with the draft Plan. The full comments of circulated adjacent municipalities are contained within Attachment 'B'; however, a summary of the key concerns raised is set out below.

City of Airdrie

- The City states that it could support the proposed Plan with the formalization of a Joint Planning Area (JPA) or under the terms of an Intermunicipal Collaborative Framework (ICF). It notes that in the case of a JPA, this would likely comprise an adopted Context Plan and associated agreements, while for an ICF, a Memorandum of Understanding of mutually acceptable terms.
- While there is an appreciation of the desire for flexibility in planning growth areas in the draft Plan, the City is requesting language that directs growth to specific, efficient locations. The City indicates that the use of "should" statements within draft Plan policies rather than "shall" statements does not help support the purpose of the Regional Growth Plan in directing growth to defined strategic locations.

The City of Calgary

The City raised several concerns with the draft Plan and is requesting that County Council not give second reading to the document until further time is given to allow both Administrations to resolve the identified concerns. The City's principal areas of concern include:

- In conflict with the Interim Growth Plan (Policy 3.2.3), The City asserts that the County has not sufficiently addressed potential detrimental impacts on Calgary's regionally significant infrastructure, corridors, and services.
- The City contends that the proposed Plan does not identify priority growth areas or provide growth management policies for the County, and suggests that this has potential to create a dispersed pattern of growth, contrary to the intent of the Interim Growth Plan.
- The City has significant concern that the Plan does not adequately address source water protection concerns.
- The City is requesting removal of the Plan's County growth areas from City of Calgary growth corridors approved within the Calgary and Rocky View County Intermunicipal Development Plan; this specifically relates to the County's developer-led Shepard Industrial ASP project, which is ongoing.
- The City considers that the County has not undertaken sufficient collaboration in developing the draft Plan to resolve cross-boundary issues.

Town of Cochrane

- In its Cochrane Community Vision, The Town identified a need to protect the gateways into Cochrane (Highway 22 and Highway 1A) and retain their rural character. The Town is requesting that the draft Plan reflects these gateways through policy amendments.
- The Town considers that moving forward with the identification of growth areas and employment lands before the completion of the Regional Growth Plan is against the spirit of regional collaboration.

At the time of drafting this report, County Administration is continuing to collaborate with the three (3) municipalities that have outstanding concerns, and will present any suggested revisions to the MDP draft to Council for consideration at the public hearing. However, Administration does consider that



regardless of any further amendments made to the draft Plan, the document attached to this report is in full alignment with the Interim Growth Plan and all relevant IDPs.

CHANGES SINCE FIRST READING:

In finalizing the draft Plan, Administration made several revisions to the first reading bylaw draft and these are noted within Schedule 'A' of the Bylaw (see Attachment 'A'). The amendments include:

- inserting additional mapping to illustrate regional corridors and infrastructure;
- adding and amending policy on items such as source water protection, flood risk, and transit in response to intermunicipal and agency feedback, and to ensure alignment with the Interim Growth Plan;
- minor textual amendments to improve clarity and interpretation; and
- mapping changes to growth area maps to align with intended ASP direction and existing approvals.

PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS:

The Public Hearing was advertised in accordance with the MGA. The 44 letters received in response can be viewed in Attachment 'C'.

OPTIONS:

- Option #1: Motion #1 THAT Bylaw C-8090-2020 be amended in accordance with Attachment 'A'
- Motion #2 THAT Bylaw C-8090-2020 be given a second reading, as amended.
- Motion #3 THAT Bylaw C-8090-2020, as amended, be referred to the Calgary Metropolitan Region Board for approval.
- Option #2: THAT Bylaw C-8090-2020 be refused.
- Option #3: THAT alternate direction be provided.

Respectfully submitted,

Concurrence,

"Theresa Cochran"

"Al Hoggan"

Executive Director
Community Development Services

Chief Administrative Officer

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ATTACHMENTS

- ATTACHMENT 'A': Bylaw C-8090-2020 and Schedule 'A' (MDP)
- ATTACHMENT 'B': Intermunicipal Comments
- ATTACHMENT 'C': Public Submissions